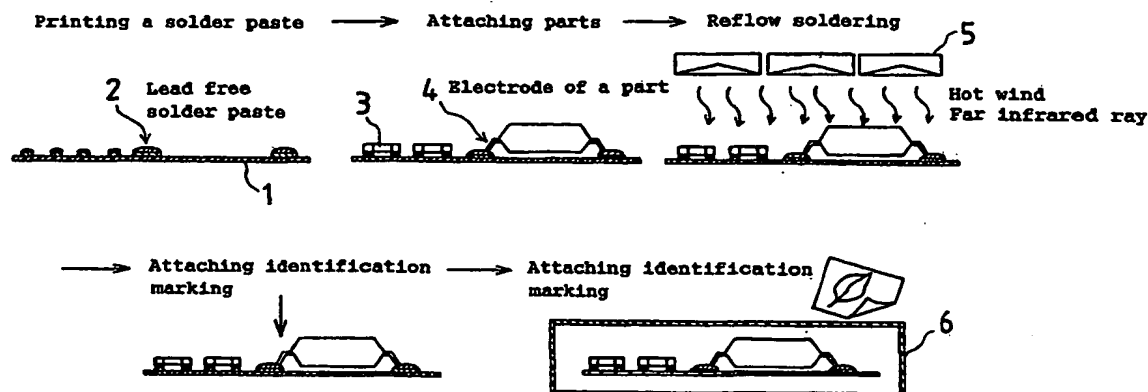




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(54) Title: ARTICLE HAVING A CIRCUIT SOLDERED WITH PARTS AND METHOD FOR RECYCLING WASTES OF THE SAME		

**(57) Abstract**

The disclosure provides an article (6) having a circuit (1) mounted with parts (3) characterized by comprising an electronic part (3) soldered with a lead free solder (2) and having an identification marking indicating no inclusion of lead and an electrical appliance including the same. The present invention also provides a recycling method of wastes of the same. The present invention can offer an article having a circuit mounted with parts and an electrical appliance including the same both of which facilitate identification whether lead which is poisonous to human body is contained or not.

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DESCRIPTION

Article having a circuit soldered with parts and method for recycling wastes of the same

Technical Field

The present invention relates to an article having a circuit soldered with parts facilitating efficient recycling and an electrical appliance including the same, and a method for recycling wastes of the same.

Background Art

Solders used during a mounting step of a part such as optical part (or deviece) and electronic part onto an article such as printed board, film board and housing or enclosure having a circuit normally contain a large quantity of lead.

Therefore, when articles having a circuit soldered with parts by using a solder or electrical appliances comprising the same are placed outdoors as wastes after use and weather-exposed, or are ground and buried for disposal, there arises a risk of groundwater pollution by the lead contained in the solder dissolving from the wastes.

Since the use of such lead-polluted groundwater as drinking water produces hazardous effects on human body, how to treat electrical appliance junks has become a current

issue of significance.

Conventionally, in order to prevent pollution by lead, the electrical appliance is disassembled primarily to collect the article having a circuit, which is contained in the appliance, and a lead containing solder is isolated in junking or recycling the electrical appliance. The remaining parts are then ground into small pieces to separate materials or are buried at a controlled dumping ground, which is designed to best obviate leakage or draining of polluted water.

In order to prevent environmental pollution by such hazardous lead, there is a demand for full recycling of lead or discontinuing the use of lead.

In order to realize a circulating economical community, it has been planned to impose a duty on every manufacturer in year 2,001 to take back used electrical appliances for return and recycling them.

Under the circumstance, however, as shown in FIG. 4, the article having a circuit using the lead containing solder and electrical appliances comprising such article (hereinafter simply referred to as "lead containing article") on one hand, and the article having a circuit soldered with parts using a lead free solder and electrical appliances comprising such article (hereinafter simply referred to as "lead free article") on the other hand have been manufactured and sold on the market at the same time. As a result, the

two types of articles coexist on the market and are recovered as they are. The recovered articles are directly conveyed to a nearby controlled dumping ground or stabilizing dumping ground, or are treated for recycling. It is noted that the printed board and film board are contained inside the electrical appliance.

At the controlled dumping ground, the recovered articles are buried as they are without any treatment. However, at the stabilizing dumping ground, the recovered articles are treated to prevent them from scattering, flying or migrating before they are buried.

When recycled, on the other hand, the recovered articles are disassembled, and if contained, lead is isolated to make them harmless. Then, reusable materials are selected for recycling.

A method of simply burying mixed wastes of the lead containing article and the lead free article at the controlled dumping ground is easy and simple in operation but has a high construction cost, producing a problem of high treatment cost.

A method of burying the waste without recycling reusable material at a dumping ground has a problem in the aspect of effective use of resources. This method has another problem that the dumping ground itself is being saturated with supramaximal wastes.

Moreover, isolation and recovery of the solder by

disassembling only the waste of the lead containing article from the mixed wastes of the lead containing article and the lead free article is not feasible and requires not only a specific instrument and an investment therefor but also a specific additional working step, which increases the treatment cost.

If the lead free article only can be recovered from among the mixed waste, it becomes possible to bury it at the stabilizing dumping ground with low construction cost by simply grinding the article. Therefore, identification and separation between the lead free article and the lead containing article among the miscellaneous recovered wastes can reduce the cost for disposal.

Under the circumstance, however, such identification takes much time and labor and has poor efficiency. Therefore, a simple means for identifying the lead free article from the lead containing article has been desired for.

In view of the above-mentioned problems, a primary object of the present invention is to provide an article having a printed board which facilitates identification whether lead is contained or not and an electrical appliance including the same.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a recycling method of the same.

Disclosure of Invention

The article having a circuit with parts, which are soldered by a lead free solder in accordance with the present invention has identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in the article.

In a preferred mode of the present invention, an electrode of the parts is a lead free electrode having a coating of a lead free solder.

In another preferred mode of the present invention, the parts themselves are lead free parts containing no lead.

In still another preferred mode of the present invention, the article is a printed board, a film board or a housing on which a circuit is formed.

In a further preferred mode of the present invention, the article has an identification marking, bar code carrying identification information or IC carrying identification information.

In a still further preferred mode of the present invention, the identification marking is varied by the type of solder.

It is also desirable that the bar code or IC carries information about the type and composition of solder, kind of soldered parts, a material of the article and the like.

The electrical appliance in accordance with the

present invention comprises an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating the article, wherein the article or the housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead.

The recycling method of wastes containing an article having a circuit soldered with parts and identification information about presence or absence of lead such as presence of soldered parts with a lead free solder or absence of lead in said article or an electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article, wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free article or lead free electrical appliance from those of various articles having a circuit soldered with parts or various electrical appliances based on the information about identification.

It is preferred that the recycling method further comprising:

individually separating a lead containing article having a circuit soldered with parts and a lead free article having a circuit soldered with parts for treating wastes of articles having a circuit soldered with parts.

Further, the present invention relates a recycling

method of wastes of electrical appliance containing an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accomodating said article wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating absence of lead, comprising:

discriminating an article having a circuit soldered with lead free parts from an article having a circuit soldered with lead containing parts by means of an identification marking provided on said article,

recovering, grinding and melting each of discriminated articles to separate materials constituting the article,

recycling reusable valuables contained in said materials, and

shredding the rest of the article and burying the same or treating the same at a stabilizing dumping ground or a controlled dumping ground for disposal.

The method preferably further comprises, before said discrimination,

classifying wastes of miscellaneous electrical appliances by the type of electrical appliance, identifying the presence or absence of lead by means of said identification marking to discriminate a lead free elestrical appliance from a lead containing article, and

disassembling each electrical appliance to remove an article having a circuit soldered with parts therefrom.

Brief Description of Drawings

FIG. 1 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for use in portable minidisk (MD) players by means of reflow soldering process.

FIG. 2 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for use in electric rice cooker by means of flow soldering process.

FIG. 3 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for controlling automatic electronic parts mounting machine by using the flow and reflow soldering process in combination.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating a conventional series of processes of manufacturing, marketing, recovering and junking an article.

FIG. 5 is a flow chart illustrating a series of processes of manufacturing, marketing, recovering and junking an article in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 6 is an upper view of a board with an attached identification label.

FIG. 7 is an upper view of a board with a printed identification marking.

FIG. 8 is an upper view of another board with a printed identification marking.

FIG. 9 is an upper view of a board with an attached copper foil having a punched character as an

identification marking.

FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view schematically illustrating an electrical appliance including a housing having a bar code as an identification marking.

FIG. 11 is an upper view of a board having a bar code as an identification marking.

FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view schematically illustrating an electrical appliance including a housing having an identification IC as an identification marking.

FIG. 13 is an upper view of a board having an IC as an identification marking.

FIG. 14 is a flow chart illustrating a recycling method of an electrical appliance in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 15 is a picture illustrating a structure of one example of a recycling apparatus applicable to the recycling method in accordance with the present invention.

Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

As illustrated above, the present invention is characterized by attaching information about identification indicating no use or inclusion of lead in an article such as a circuit board like printed board and film board soldered with parts using a lead free solder, a housing having a circuit formed thereon, or a housing of an electrical appliance comprising the article having a circuit.

In the present invention, a "article having a circuit soldered with parts" conceptually includes an article such as printed board, film board and housing having a circuit, onto which an optical part and/or an electrical part is/are soldered.

In the following, the present invention will be described more specifically by means of embodiments, taking an identification marking as representative.

As shown in FIG. 5, the identification marking enables simple and easy identification between the lead free article and the lead containing article among miscellaneous wastes recovered in situ from the market.

The lead free article contains an extremely low percentage of poisonous lead to human body. Therefore, even if buried as it is, the lead free article can have an only slight effect on human body and can, therefore, be recycled by simply grinding it to separate reusable materials without necessitating isolation and recovery of the solder. The remaining non-reusable materials can be buried at the stabilizing dumping ground having low cost.

The identification marking can restrict the treatment for making an article harmless by disassembling it to isolate and remove lead only to the lead containing article. This in turn reduces the volume of wastes to be buried at the costly controlled dumping ground.

As such, the present invention can reduce both the

recycling and junking cost of wastes.

It is preferred that a part to be soldered on the article having a circuit such as printed board has a lead free electrode having a coating of a lead free solder, because this can still minimize the content of lead in the resultant article having a circuit and enhance the strength of an electrode-lead free solder junction thereby elongating the life of the article.

When the part to be soldered on the printed board is a part such as hybrid IC, which is formed by soldering an IC chip or a capacitor on the board, then the use of lead free solder for soldering the IC chip or capacitor can eliminate lead from the resultant article having a circuit perfectly. Such lead free article also may carry a similar identification marking to the above which serves as identification information.

Parts to be soldered onto printed boards and the like may be exemplified as semiconductor, resistor, capacitor, coil, switch, LED, oscillator, connector, liquid crystal, transducer, etc.

A method for attaching the identification marking is not limited particularly if the method allows the attachment to the printed board, housing or the like and gives an identification marking which would remain recognizable without going out with time. Exemplary effective methods are printing, inscribing and labelling.

More specifically, a method as appropriate may be selected according to the material of a part to which the identification marking is to be attached.

The printed board may be composed of a material including a resin such as phenolic resin, epoxy resin, polyimide resin or polyester resin, a metal such as iron, copper, aluminum alloy, ceramics such as alumina or glass, or paper. The printed board may optionally contain a glass cloth. The printed board may contain one or more of the exemplified material.

The housing is composed of a material including a metal such as iron, aluminum, magnesium alloy, a resin such as polypropylene, polystyrene, ABS resin, polycarbonate, ceramics or wood. The housing may contain one or more of the exemplified material.

Exemplary applicable printing methods include painting, stamping, ink jet and so on. These methods are preferable because they can be integrated with a conventional marking process such as printing a lot number, printing a visual design, etc. Of them, painting integrated with visual design printing on the housing is particularly desirable because it is hard to go out.

The use of a fluorescent paint as ink is also preferred, because it facilitates simple and rapid identification of a mass of wastes using an optical sensor.

Inscribing can be performed concurrently with

article design printing at the time of molding the housing of an article or otherwise at a final step. Inscribing is preferred, because it does not require a tedious step and is hard to go out.

Labelling is preferred, because it readily permits uniformity of identification marking among a variety of electrical appliances and among miscellaneous manufacturers, thereby further facilitating identification at recycling operation.

In attaching the identification marking to the electrical appliance, it may be carried on either the article having a circuit like printed board or the housing or on the both. However, in the aspect of eliminating an additional subsequent disassembling step, it is more convenient to carry the identification marking at least on the housing.

The present invention also provides a method of recycling wastes of the article having a circuit and a recycling method of wastes of the electrical appliance, the recycling method comprising a step of identifying the lead free article having a circuit from among recovered miscellaneous wastes of articles having a circuit or identifying the lead free electrical appliance from among recovered miscellaneous wastes of electrical appliances with the aid of identification marking, in order to isolate the former for recycling.

In the following, the present invention will be

described taking the use of identification marking having information about identification as representative.

In recycling the wastes of the article having a circuit attached with the identification marking and the electrical appliance comprising the same, the identification marking helps to identify and select only the lead free article from among the mixed wastes of the lead free article and the lead containing article.

Selection of the wastes by the identification marking is preferable, because it expedites recycling operation.

Selection of the wastes by the identification marking attached to the housing of the electrical appliance can also omit the additional subsequent disassembling step.

Selection of the wastes can be performed by various methods: manual selection based on a determination using the identification marking, selection of the wastes using a sensor which can recognize the identification marking, such as inspection camera, by conveying the wastes on a conveyor belt, etc.

Marking for identification can be carried out in various ways as shown below.

(1) Bonding an identification label on a board

FIG. 6 is an upper view of a board 10 with an identification label 11 by bonding it to the board.

An identification label is bonded to a board or on a space between large parts on the board. The use of a fluorescent ink as the printing ink for the label enables automatic determination of the presence or absence of the label by a combination of a darkroom and a inspection camera during recycling process.

Written information as to what kind of solder is used, Sn-Ag, Sn-Ag-Bi, Sn-Cu or Sn-Zn for example, enables identification of the board including the lead containing solder as well as identification and separation of boards by the type of solder. Treatment of the board by the type of solder during recovery of solder increases the purity of solder as recovered and enables recovery of valuables having a high addition value. It is also effective to vary the color of identification label by the type of solder.

If the identification marking is varied in color, it becomes possible to separate the used solder by the type apparently. If a metal contained in the recovered waste is to be refined for recycling, since the used metal has been separated by the type of material, it becomes possible to recycle a more refined metal. If different boards having a variety of solders are refined at the same time, the resultant refined product contains a variety of components, rendering recycling of the product difficult. Although the identification label is varied in color here, a symbol such as ○ and × may be attached.

As such, a provision of a character, color or symbol in the identification marking enables recycling the waste in a short time with high accuracy, thereby increasing recycling efficiency.

(2) Printing on a board

FIG. 7 is an upper view of a board with an identification marking 13 by printing it on the board by means of ink jetting or stamping.

As shown in FIG. 7, the use of ink jetting enables printing the identification marking from above a part 12 on the board.

Since ink jetting does not greatly restrict the shape of board and arrangement of parts and allows free choice of the type of character, it becomes possible to print an identification marking that can identify the type of used solder as in the bonding method explained in the above paragraph (1).

The use of stamping enables lower cost printing than the ink jetting.

As in the above (1), the use of a fluorescent ink as printing ink renders automatic determination of the presence or absence of the identification marking feasible by a combination of a darkroom and a inspection camera during recycling process.

(3) Printing an identification marking on a board during its manufacturing process

This method permits in situ application of a general process for marking an indication of parts during board manufacturing process without an additional step for marking the identification marking using a specific identification marking apparatus. This results in an advantage of low manufacturing cost.

FIG. 8 is an upper view of another board with the identification marking 13 by printing it directly on the board. Direct printing on the board enables printing a large identification marking over the entire board regardless of the position of parts. This makes recycling operation feasible.

(4) Varying board color

The board generally has a green color which is a resist color of the solder. In the present invention, colors other than green, such as blue, red, black, etc., for example, are used for the resist to facilitate identification during recycling process.

The board and resist normally contain a halogen element which can be an environmental loading substance, so that they can become an origin of hazardous dioxin when they are burnt. This has accelerated commercialization of a board containing no halogen element, that is, halogen free board.

Since a green dye used in the conventional resist of the solder contains the halogen element, it has been contemplated to use a different color, such as blue, for the resist in replacing a halogen containing board with the halogen free board.

As such, if the lead free solder is combined with the halogen free board, then it becomes possible to know at first sight that the resultant board is less environmentally loading, facilitating separation of the board for treatment.

(5) Bonding an inscribed copper foil

This method mimics the above-described method of bonding an identification label but uses an inscribed copper foil as an identification marking during board manufacturing process. This method has low cost because it enables bonding the identification marking during routine board manufacturing process without an additional marking instrument for bonding the identification marking.

FIG. 9 is an upper view of a board 11 with an inscribed copper foil 14 by bonding it on the board.

(6) Disposing an identification bar code

This method attaches a bar code label as an identification marking on the board or housing or prints a bar code directly on the board or housing. This method facilitates automatic determination whether the board is lead

free or not by using a bar code reader. This method is also advantageous in that the volume of information can be increased compared with the method of identification by character or color.

Particularly, when a control system for controlling identification operation of the article having a circuit and the electrical appliance is employed, it is possible to store a data base in the control system to check a bar code number. The use of a two-dimensional bar code can increase the volume of information carried on the bar code, enabling control of more pieces of information.

If the volume of information can be increased, it is possible to process detailed information on, for example, material of housing, material of board, material of soldered parts, etc. in addition to the solder composition and ratio of the components. Controllability of detailed information would in turn enables selection of the treatment method according to the type of poisonous substance contained in parts, as well as identification of the presence or absence of lead in the waste during recycling operation. As a result, environmental pollution due to innocence of the presence of hazardous substance can be prevented.

Furthermore, this method can not only increase the value of recycling materials and improve the recycling yield by enabling recovery of all valuables, such as noble metal, contained in the waste without fail and separation of the

waste by the type of plastics used in the housing.

FIG. 10 illustrates a housing 16 of an article having a board 11 soldered with a variety of parts to which a bar code 15 is attached. FIG. 11 illustrates the board 11 to which the bar code 15 is directly attached.

(7) Using an Identification IC

This method attaches a non-contact reading type IC to the article having a circuit as an identification marking. This method enables identification between the lead free article and the lead containing article by passing them near a data reader. This method reduces restriction to the attachable site of IC and enables arbitrarily attachment of the identification IC to either the board or the housing.

This means that this method renders control of recycling of the article having a circuit and the electrical appliance including the same feasible, resulting in efficient recycling in a short time. This method also has excellent reliability with respect to identification because it is less susceptible to the influence of dirt or stain than an optical reading method using a bar code.

The identification IC has another advantage of eliminating subsequent attaching step as required by the bar code, because it can be additionally soldered during soldering other parts to the board. If the identification IC is RAM, it is reusable.

The IC can store more pieces of information. If the volume of information can be increased, it is possible to process detailed information on, for example, material of housing, material of board, material of soldered parts, etc. in addition to the solder composition and ratio of its components. Controllability of detailed information would in turn enables selection of the treatment method according to the type of poisonous substance contained in parts, as well as identification of the presence or absence of lead in the waste during recycling operation. As a result, environmental pollution due to innocence of the presence of hazardous substance can be prevented.

Furthermore, this method can not only increase the value of recycling materials and improve the recycling yield by enabling recovery of all valuables, such as noble metal, contained in the waste without fail and separation of the waste by the type of plastics used in the housing.

FIG. 12 is a schematic view of the housing 16 of an article having the board 11 soldered with a variety of parts to which an identification IC 17 is bonded. FIG. 13 is an upper view of the board 11 soldered with a variety of parts to which the identification IC 17 is directly bonded.

The recycling method of the wastes of the electrical appliance containing the article having a circuit in accordance with the present invention has the following advantages:

Recycling operation for the article having a circuit can be performed by a series of system to the final stage of treatment. Information about identification carried on the bar code and IC enables treatment of the housing, the board and the article having a circuit as appropriate. For example, it is possible to recycle an expensive IC and extract a material like palladium contained in the coating of electrodes of various parts from a molten solder material.

As the electrical appliance, household electrical appliances, such as audiovisual equipment, refrigerator, air conditioner, washing machine, lighting fixture, etc., information-associated OA equipment, such as computer, telephone, copier and facsimile, vehicle electric components, industrial machinery electric components, plant instrument electric components, and construction electric components.

FIG. 14 shows a flow chart of one example of the recycling method of the article having a circuit and/or the electrical appliance in accordance with the present invention. The recycling method of the present invention will be described along the flow chart.

Wastes of the electrical appliance are recovered (s-1) and classified by the type (s-2). Although the subsequent step is identical between all the concerned electrical appliances, description will be made on a television set here.

The identification marking attached to the

television set is used to identify whether it contains lead or not in order to separate it from the lead containing article (s-3).

Then, all the separated televisions are disassembled to remove printed boards (s-4). In this disassembling step, it is desirable to remove and separate at the same time metals, glass, plastics, etc. constituting the television.

Then, since the lead containing article may sometimes include a board using a lead free solder, the lead free board is separated from the lead containing board by the identification marking attached to the printed board (s-5).

Subsequently, the lead containing board and the lead free board are individually recovered (s-6), ground and molten (s-7) for separation of the material (s-8).

Reusable valuables such as gold are recycled (s-9) and, after being treated, the lead free board or the lead containing board is individually shredded (s-10), buried or treated appropriately at the stabilizing dumping ground or controlled dumping ground (s-11).

As the recycling system applied to the recycling method of the present invention can be exemplified as one shown in FIG. 15. The recycling system comprises identification means 20 for recognizing and identifying information about identification, such as identification marking and bar code, carried on the board or electrical

appliance. A control unit 21 reads information 22 about treatment of the solder based on the information given by the identification means 20, such as method of recovering the solder or melting condition of the solder, information 23 about treatment of part, such as method and condition of treating soldered parts, and information 24 about treatment of board, in order to control an article disassembling apparatus 25, a solder recovering and/or material separating apparatus 26 and a board disassembling apparatus 27 so that recovery and disassembly can be optimally carried out by the type of treating object, such as solder, part and board. For example, IC which is a soldered part is separated for reuse and a material contained in the electrode of part, such as palladium, is extracted from the molten solder.

In the following, the present invention will be described more specifically referring to concrete examples.

Example 1

FIG. 1 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for use in portable MD players by means of reflow soldering process.

First, a lead free solder paste 2 was printed on an electrode of a printed board 1. A variety of parts 3 were then arranged on the printed paste such that an electrode 4 of a part was opposed to the printed board 1. Subsequently, the solder paste was molten by using hot wind or far infrared

ray as a heat source 5 to solder the parts (this method is called reflow soldering). Then, a label was bonded to the printed board 1 as an identification marking indicating no inclusion of lead. An identical label was also bonded to a housing 6 of an article containing the printed board 1 thus produced.

The resultant MD player could be readily identified to be free of lead by the identification marking when it was recovered after use, which simplified the subsequent recycling process.

Example 2

FIG. 2 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for use in electric rice boiler by means of flow soldering process.

First, a part 12 whose electrode part has a coating of a lead free solder was inserted into a predetermined position of a printed board 11. Then, the printed board 11 was passed through a lead free solder jet 13 to solder the parts (this is called flow soldering). Subsequently, a marking integrated with an article design was printed on the printed board 11 as an identification marking indicating no inclusion of lead. An identical marking was also bonded to a housing 14 of an article containing the printed board 11 thus produced.

The resultant electric rice boiler could be

readily identified to be free of lead by the printed identification marking when it was recovered after use, which simplified the subsequent recycling step.

Example 3

FIG. 3 is a picture illustrating the steps of a soldering method of various parts on a printed board for controlling automatic electronic part mounting machine by using the flow and reflow soldering process in combination.

A lead free part 22 was soldered on a printed board 21 by the flow and reflow soldering process in combination and an identification marking was inscribed on the resultant printed board 21.

The printed board could be readily identified to be free of lead by the inscribed identification marking when it was recovered after use, which simplified the subsequent recycling step.

Industrial Applicability

As discussed above, the present invention can provide an article having a circuit soldered with parts and an electrical appliance including the same facilitating identification whether poisonous lead to human body is contained or not.

Of a variety of household electrical appliances installed with the article having a printed board, so far as

the so-called four majors including television set, washing machine, refrigerator and vacuum cleaner are concerned, they have a domestic production yield of 20 millions per year, respectively. In view of this fact, on assumption that a million of lead free articles would be recovered randomizedly, together with lead containing articles in recycling junked household electrical appliances from year 2001, the identification marking attached to the lead free article and the electrical appliance including the same helps to identify them from the lead containing articles, thereby excluding them from the objects from which the solder is to be isolated for recovery. An expected cost reduction by the above accounts for 50 billion per year.

Since it is predicted that coexistence of lead free articles with lead containing articles will increase year by year, cost reduction achieved by the present invention is estimated to increase proportionally.

CLAIMS

1. An article having a circuit with parts, which are soldered by a lead free solder, and identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in said article.

2. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, wherein an electrode of said parts is a lead free electrode having a coating of a lead free solder.

3. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, wherein said parts are lead free parts containing no lead.

4. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, said article being a printed board, a film board or a housing on which a circuit is formed.

5. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, said article having an identification marking, bar code carrying identification information or IC carrying identification information.

6. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 5, wherein said identification marking is varied by the type of solder.

7. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 5, wherein said bar code or IC

carries information about the type and composition of solder, kind of soldered parts, and a material of said article.

8. An electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article, wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead.

9. A recycling method of wastes containing an article having a circuit soldered with parts and identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in said article, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free article from those of various articles having a circuit soldered with parts based on said identification information.

10. The recycling method of wastes in accordance with claim 9, further comprising:

individually separating a lead containing article having a circuit soldered with parts and a lead free article having a circuit soldered with parts for treating wastes of articles having a circuit soldered with parts.

11. A recycling method of wastes containing an electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free electrical appliance from those of various electrical appliances based on said information about identification.

12. A recycling method of wastes of electrical appliance containing an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accomodating said article wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

discriminating an article having a circuit soldered with lead free parts from an article having a circuit soldered with lead containing parts by means of an identification marking provided on said article,

recovering, grinding and melting each of discriminated articles to separate materials constituting the article,

recycling reusable valuables contained in said materials, and

shredding the rest of the article and burying the same or treating the same at a stabilizing dumping ground or a controlled dumping ground for disposal.

13. The recycling method of wastes of electrical appliance in accordance with claim 12, further comprising, before said discrimination:

classifying wastes of miscellaneous electrical appliances by the type of electrical appliance,

identifying the presence or absence of lead by means of said identification marking to discriminate a lead free electrical appliance from a lead containing article, and disassembling each electrical appliance to remove an article having a circuit soldered with parts therefrom.

FIG.1

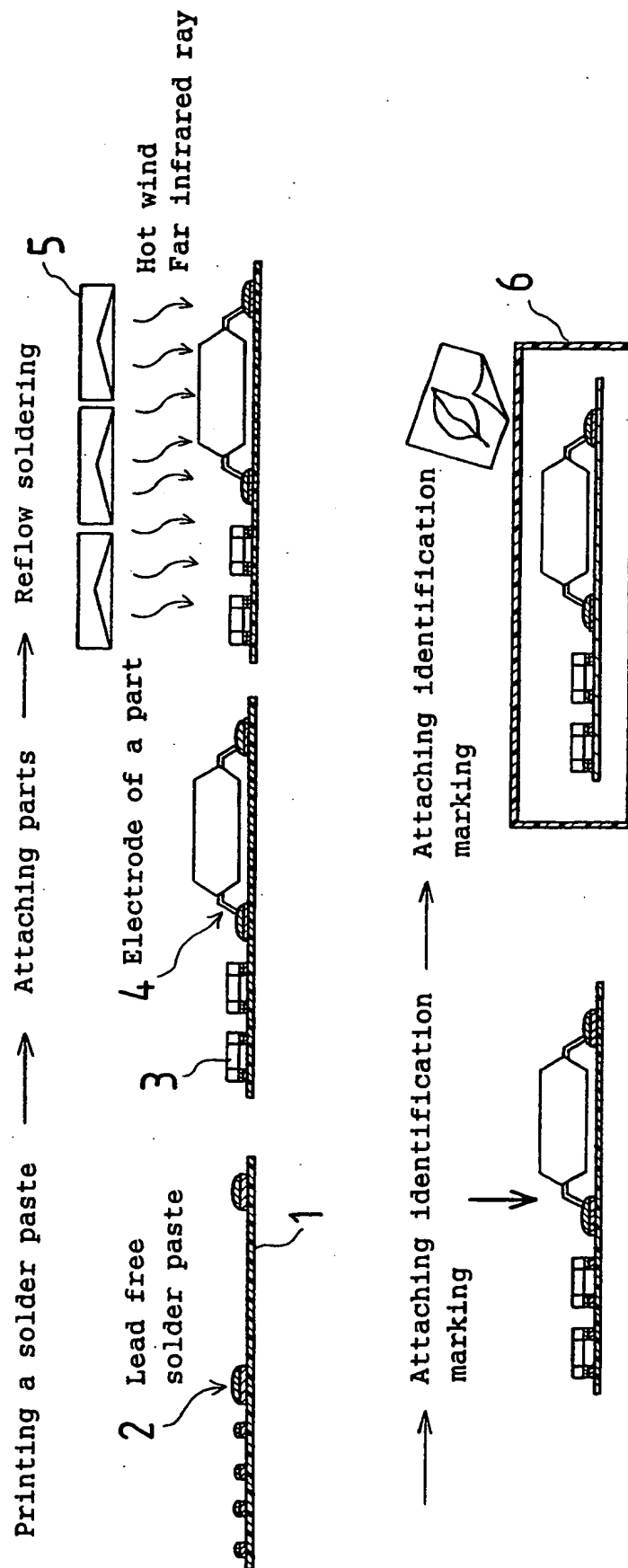


FIG. 2

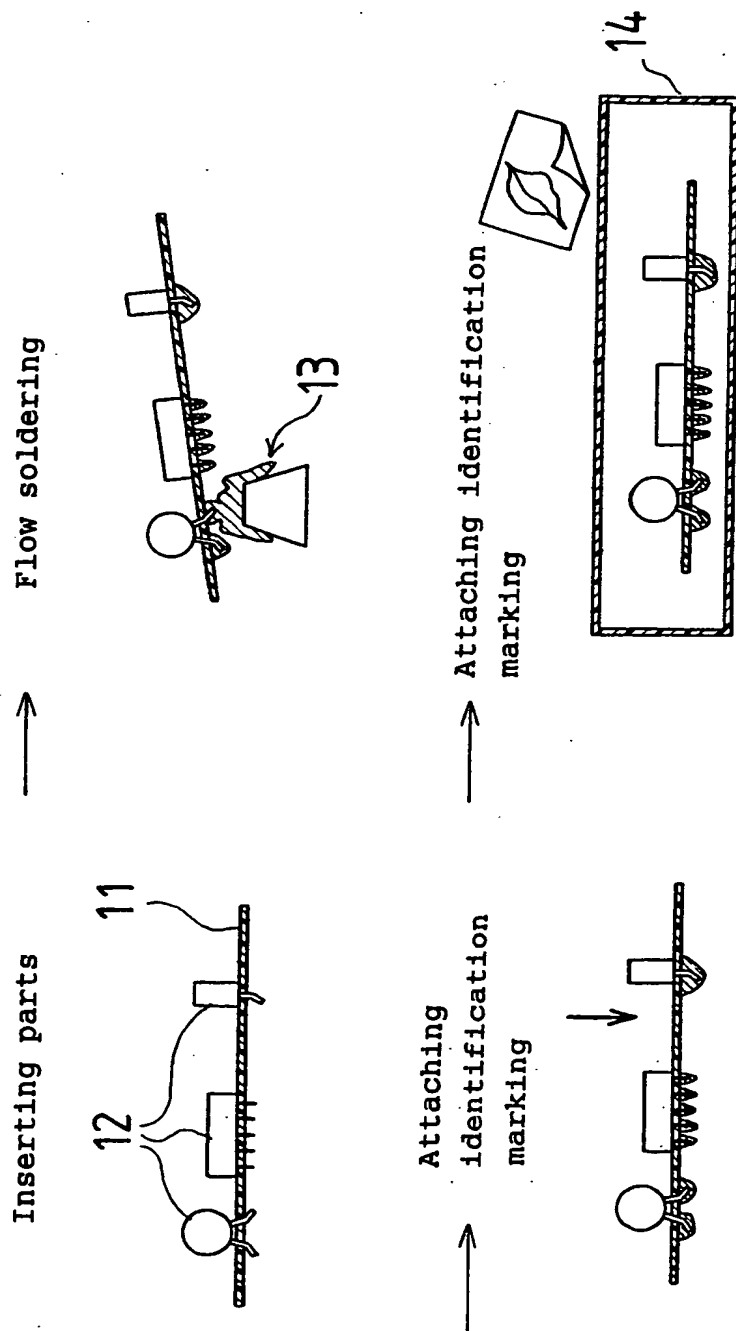
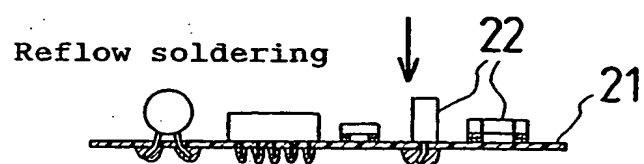


FIG. 3

Attaching identification marking



Flow soldering

FIG. 4

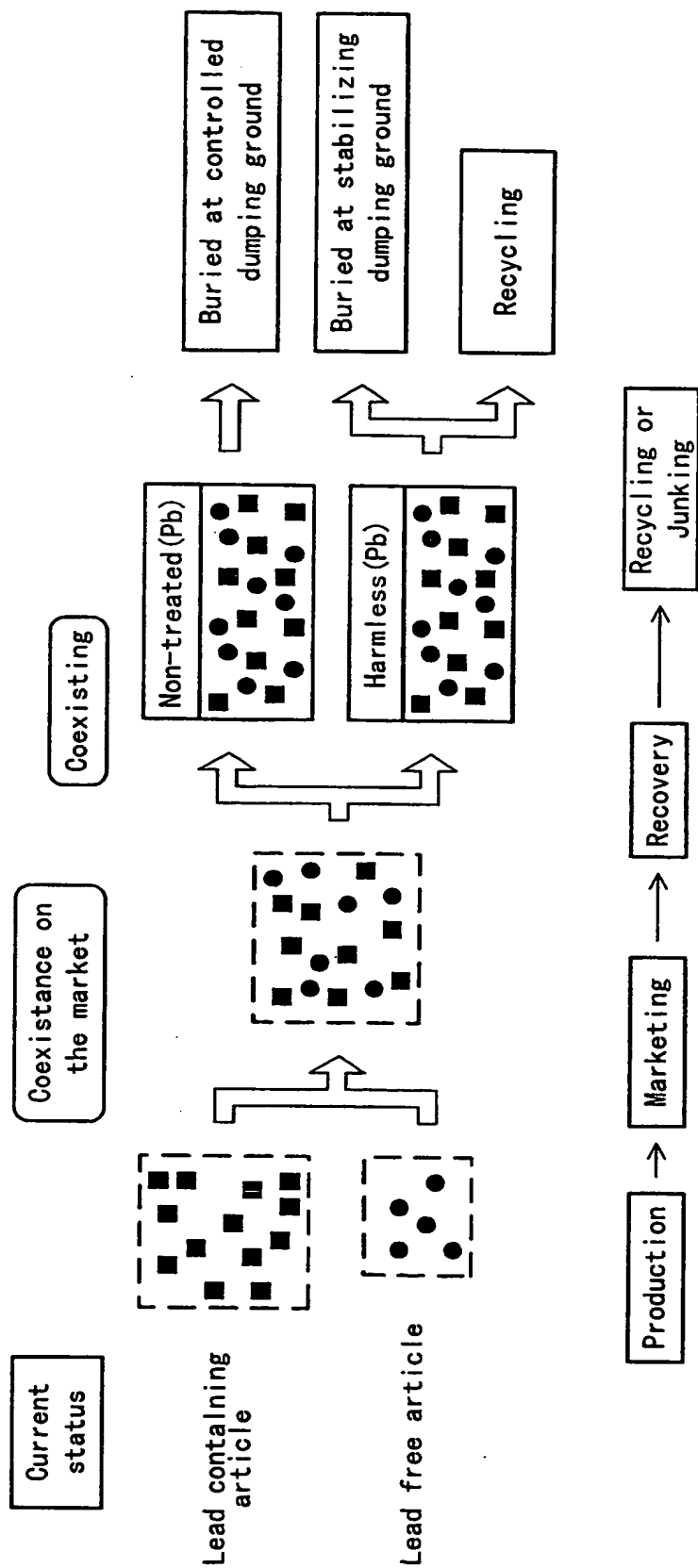


FIG. 5

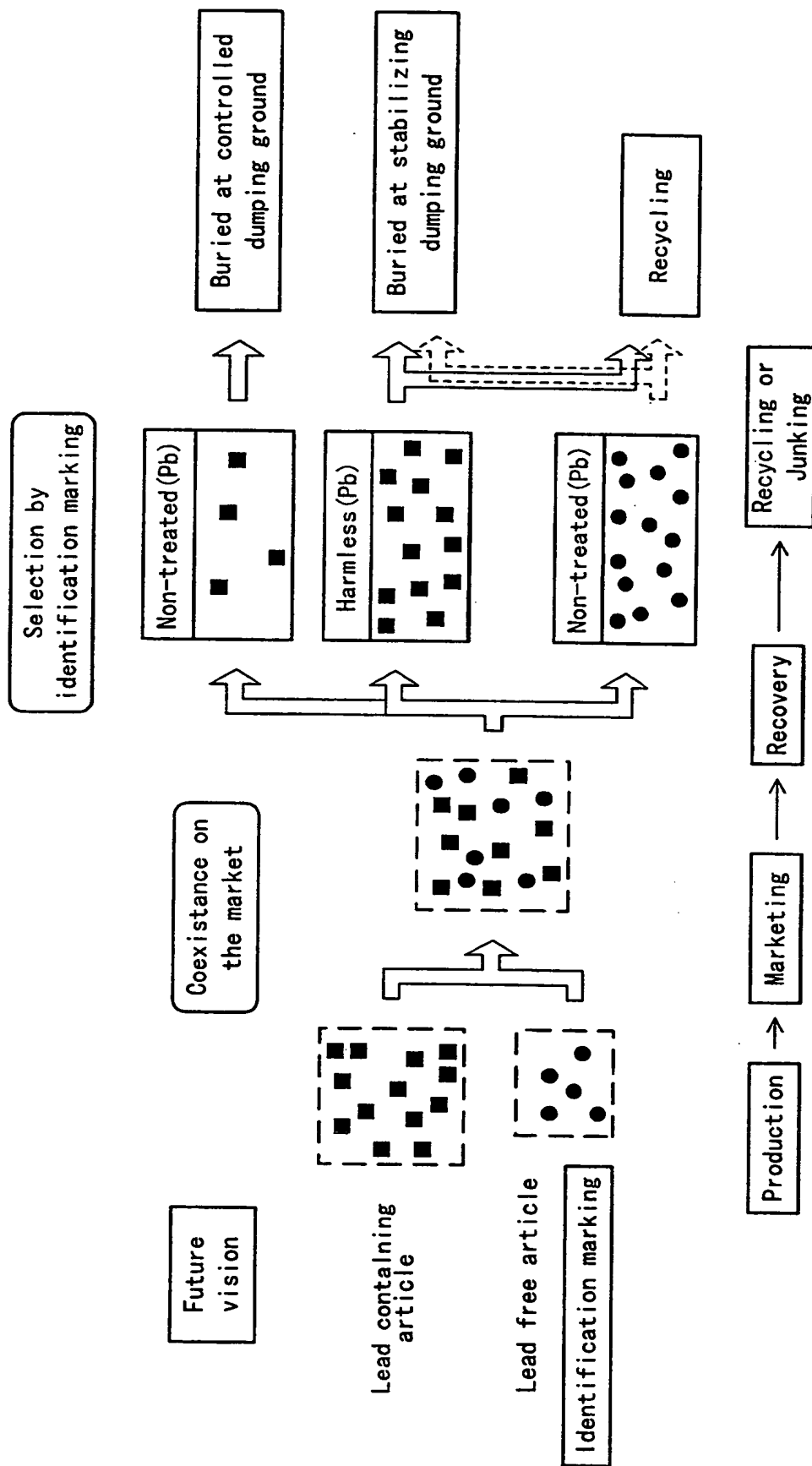


FIG. 6

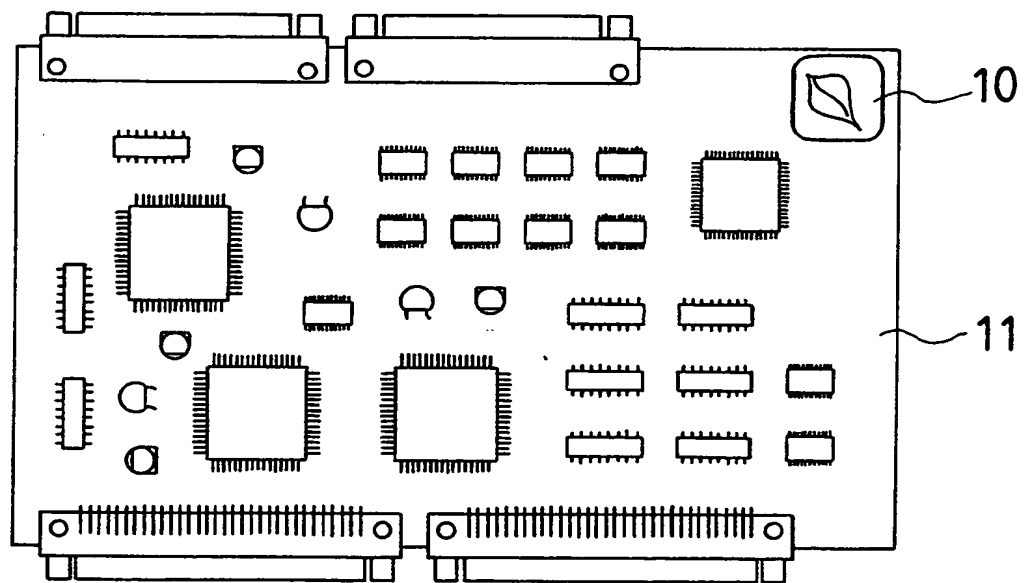


FIG. 7

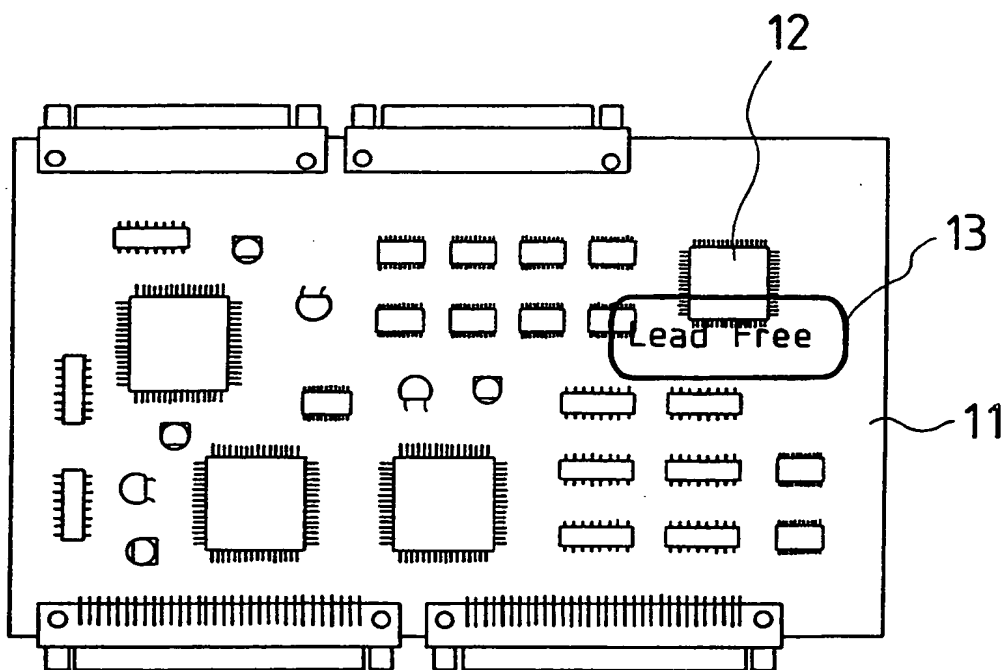


FIG. 8

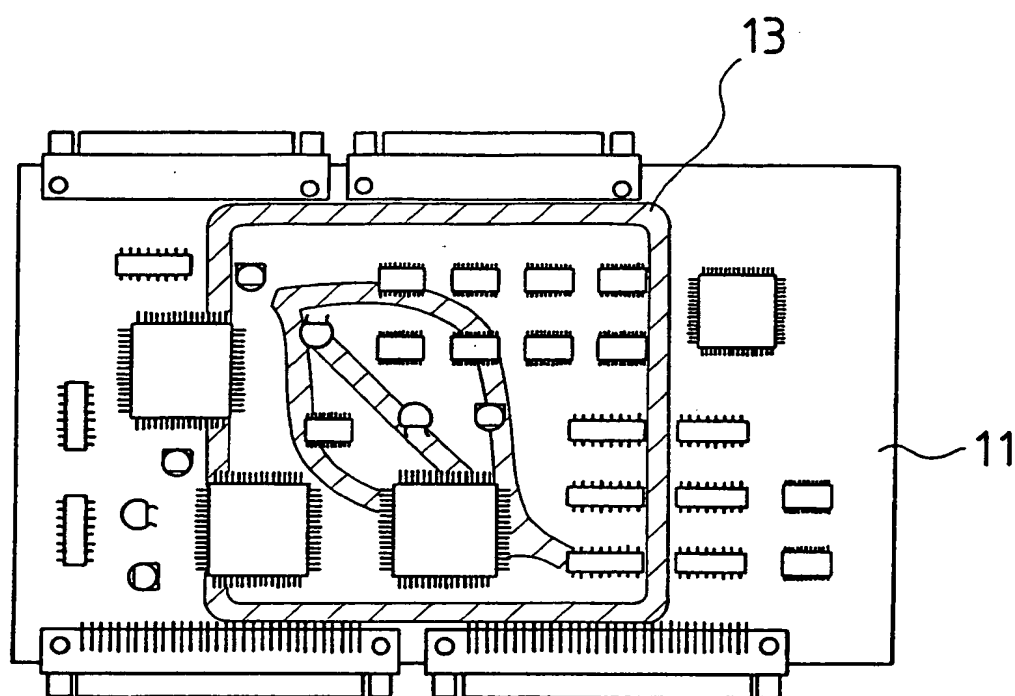


FIG. 9

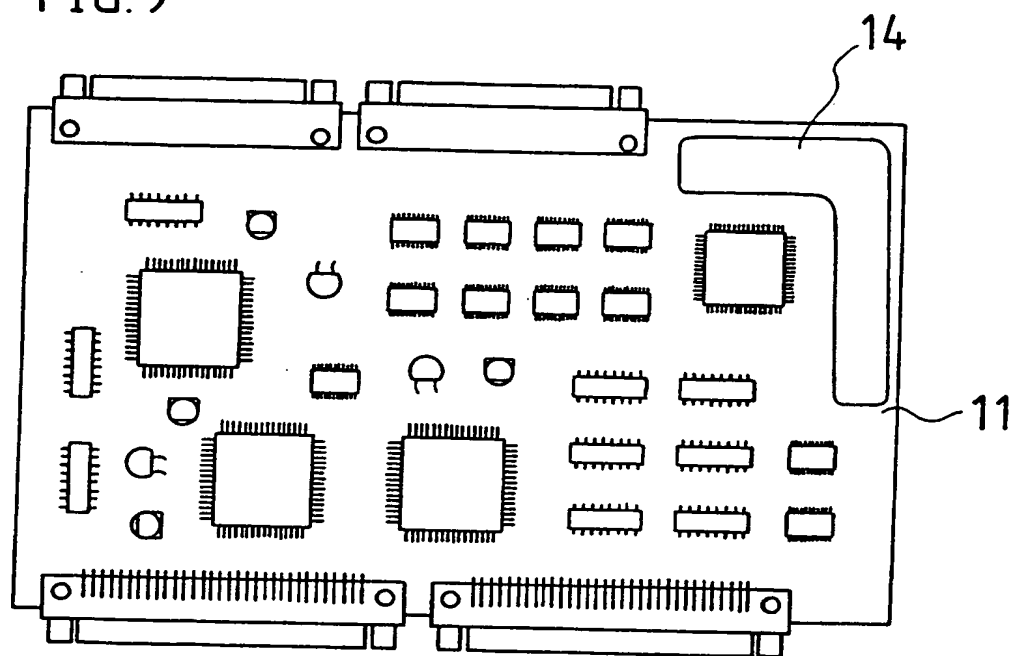


FIG. 10

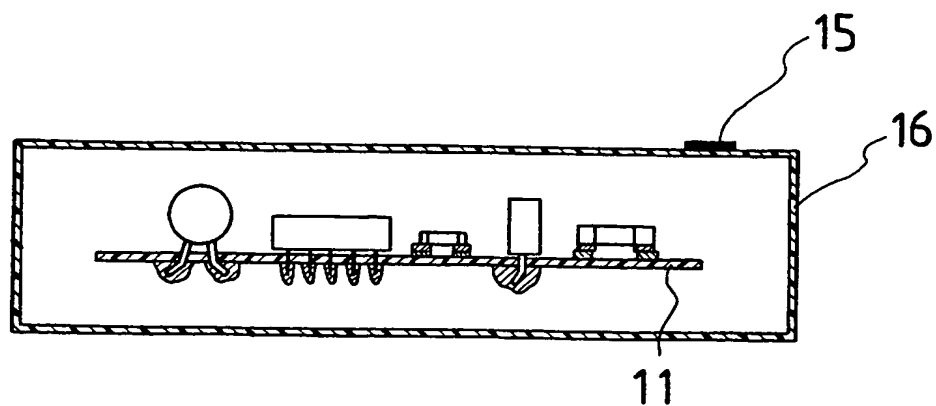


FIG. 11

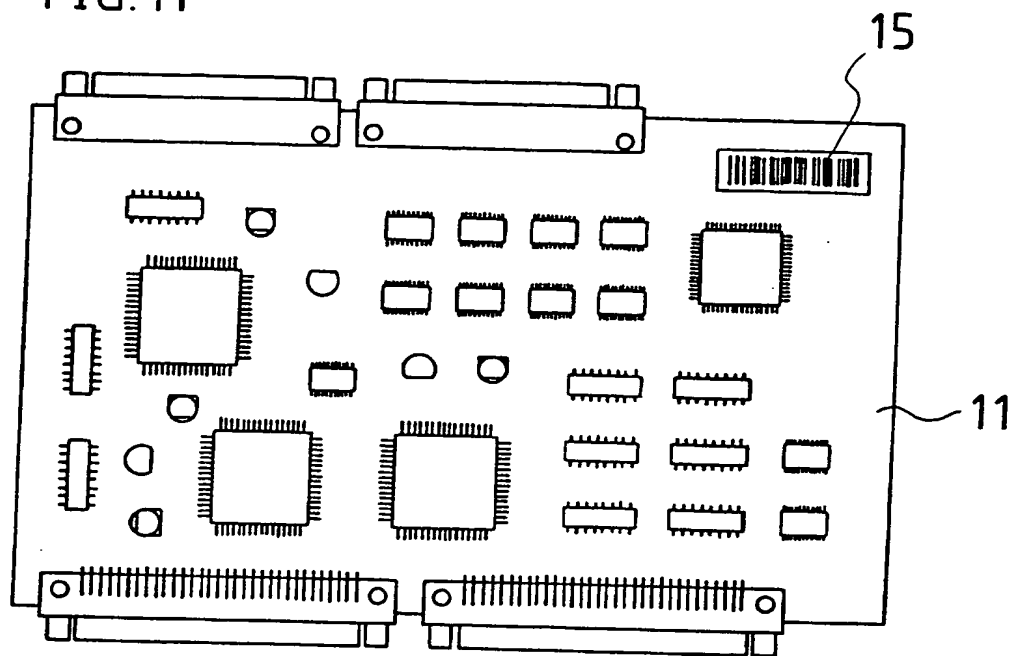


FIG. 12

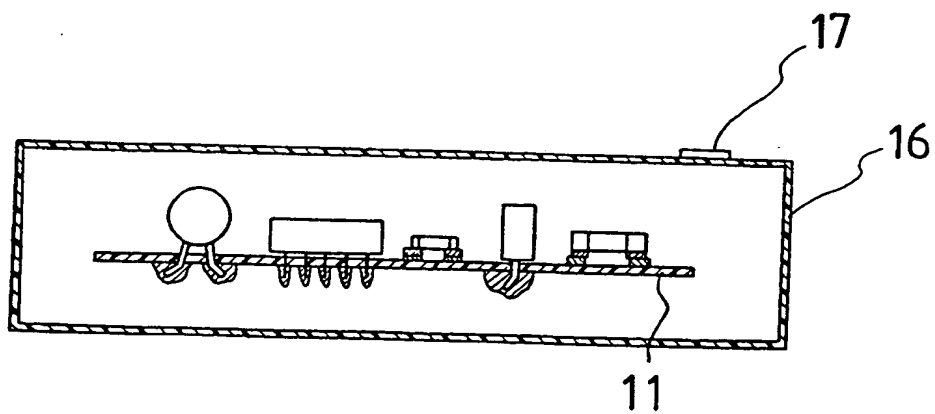
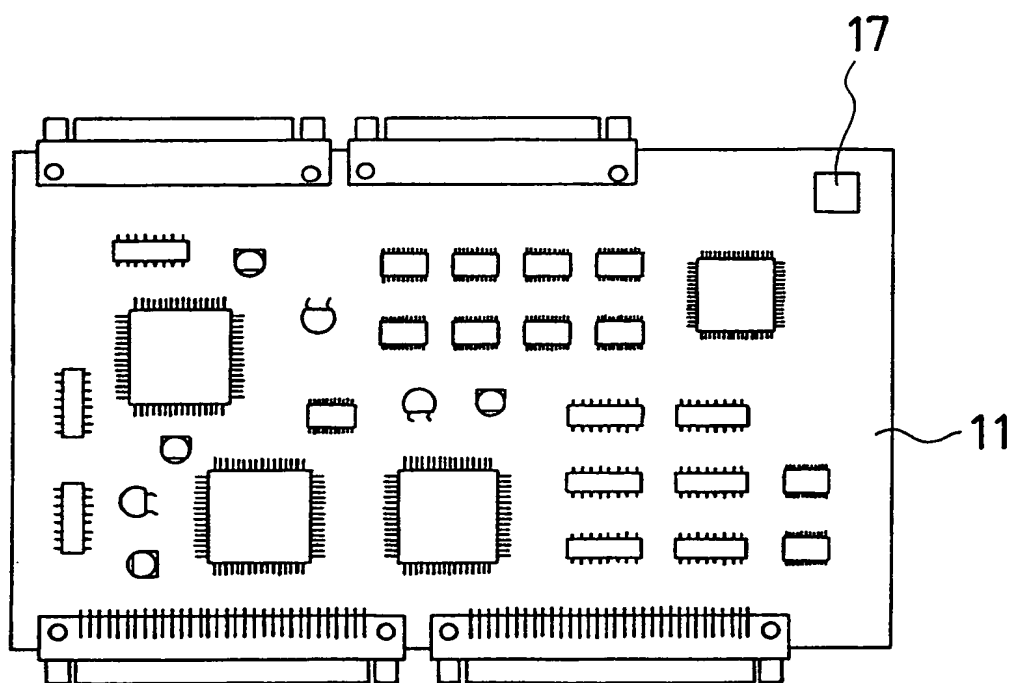


FIG.13



12/13

FIG. 14

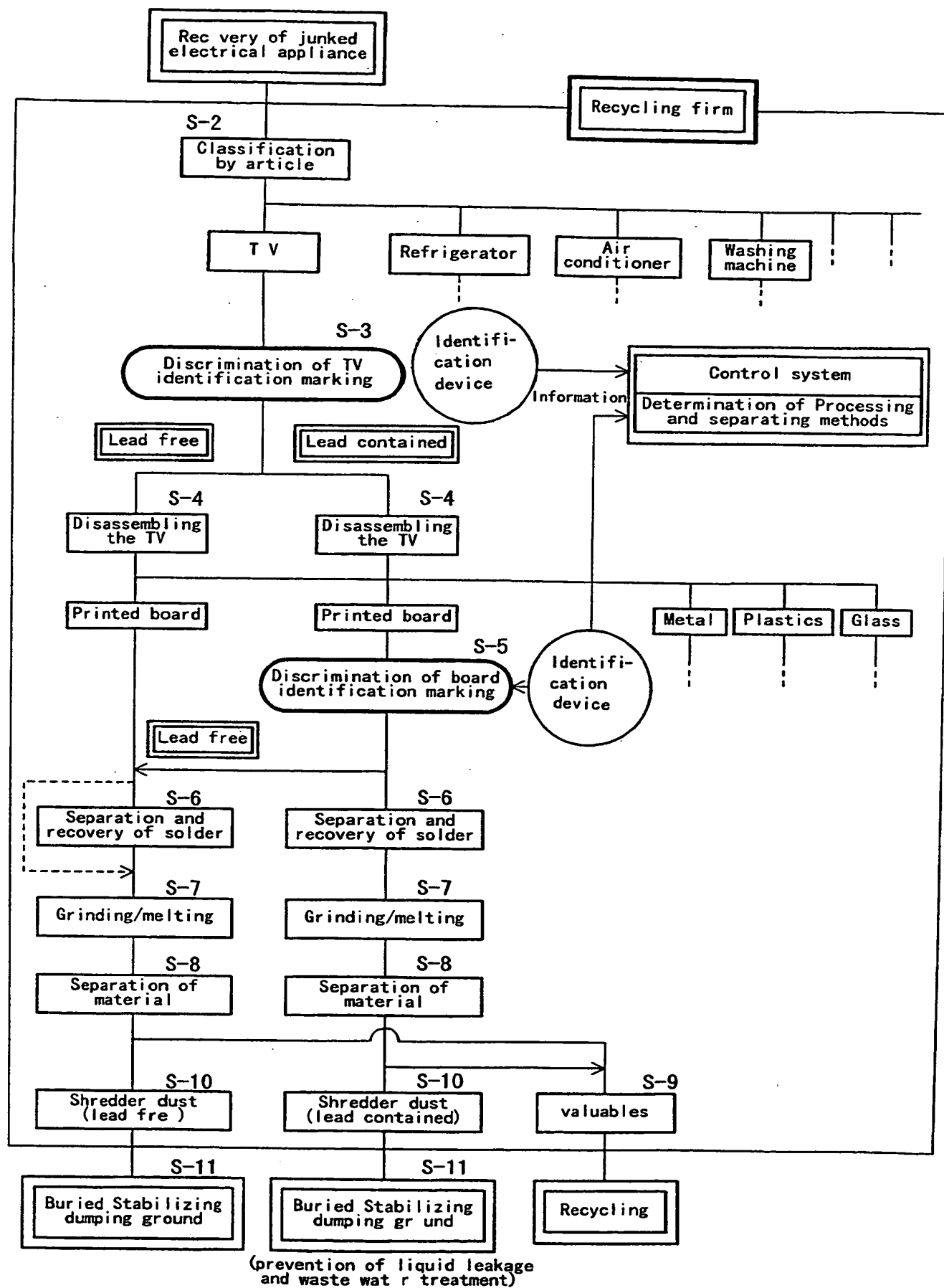
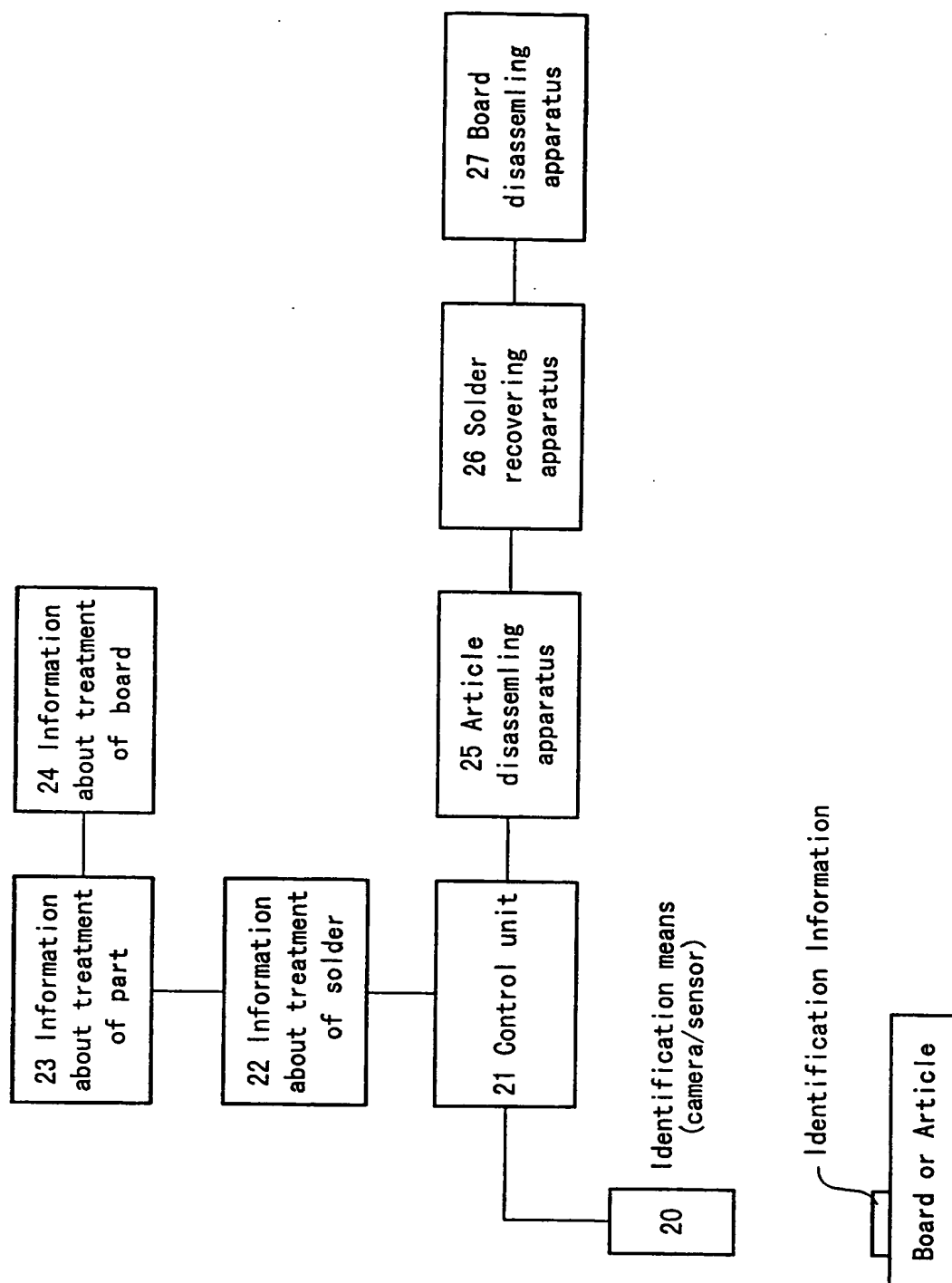


FIG. 15



PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference P21336-P0	FOR FURTHER ACTION see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.	
International application No. PCT/JP 00/00058	International filing date (day/month/year) 07/01/2000	(Earliest) Priority Date (day/month/year) 11/01/1999
Applicant MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD. et al.		

This International Search Report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This International Search Report consists of a total of 4 sheets.

☒ It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

- a. With regard to the language, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

☐ the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

- b. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

☐ contained in the international application in written form.

☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

☐ the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

☐ the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

2. ☐ Certain claims were found unsearchable (See Box I).

3. ☐ Unity of invention is lacking (see Box II).

4. With regard to the title,

☒ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☐ the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the abstract,

☐ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☒ the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the drawings to be published with the abstract is Figure No.

☒ as suggested by the applicant.

☐ because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

☐ because this figure better characterizes the invention.

1
☐ None of the figures.

Box III TEXT OF THE ABSTRACT (Continuation of item 5 of the first sheet)

The abstract is changed as follows:

- line 1, insert "(6)" after "article"
- line 2, insert "(1)" after "circuit"
- line 2, insert "(3)" after "parts"
- line 3, insert "(3)" after "part"
- line 3, insert "(2)" after "solder"

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/JP 00/00058

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 7 H05K1/02 H05K13/08 C22B7/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 H05K C22B

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1996, no. 4, 30 April 1996 (1996-04-30) & JP 07 326834 A (HITACHI), 12 December 1995 (1995-12-12) abstract	1-5,9
Y	EP 0 831 683 A (NORTHERN TELECOM) 25 March 1998 (1998-03-25) abstract	1-5,9
A	DE 44 24 385 A (NEELEN) 18 January 1996 (1996-01-18) abstract	1,13
	-/-	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

"Z" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

29 March 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

10/04/2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Mes, L

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/JP 00/00058

C. (Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1997, no. 8, 29 August 1997 (1997-08-29) & JP 09 103761 A (HITACHI), 22 April 1997 (1997-04-22) abstract	1, 13
A	FR 2 724 529 A (DEMOVALE SA) 15 March 1996 (1996-03-15) claims	8, 11-13
A	US 5 743 936 A (YOKOYAMA ET AL.) 28 April 1998 (1998-04-28) abstract	12, 13
A	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1995, no. 6, 31 July 1995 (1995-07-31) & JP 07 066512 A (CANON), 10 March 1995 (1995-03-10) abstract	1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/JP 00/00058

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
JP 07326834 A	12-12-1995	NONE	
EP 831683 A	25-03-1998	CA 2214130 A JP 10107420 A	19-03-1998 24-04-1998
DE 4424385 A	18-01-1996	NONE	
JP 09103761 A	22-04-1997	NONE	
FR 2724529 A	15-03-1996	NONE	
US 5743936 A	28-04-1998	JP 2713231 B JP 8309328 A DE 19619965 A	16-02-1998 26-11-1996 21-11-1996
JP 07066512 A	10-03-1995	NONE	

REPLACED BY
ART 34 AMDT

Disclosure of Invention

The article having a circuit with parts, which are soldered by a lead free solder in accordance with the present invention has identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in the article.

In a preferred mode of the present invention, an electrode of the parts is a lead free electrode having a coating of a lead free solder.

In another preferred mode of the present invention, the parts themselves are lead free parts containing no lead.

In still another preferred mode of the present invention, the article is a printed board, a film board or a housing on which a circuit is formed.

In a further preferred mode of the present invention, the article has an identification marking, bar code carrying identification information or IC carrying identification information.

In a still further preferred mode of the present invention, the identification marking is varied by the type of solder.

It is also desirable that the bar code or IC carries information about the type and composition of solder, kind of soldered parts, a material of the article and the like.

The electrical appliance in accordance with the

present invention comprises an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating the article, wherein the article or the housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead.

The recycling method of wastes containing an article having a circuit soldered with parts and identification information about presence or absence of lead such as presence of soldered parts with a lead free solder or absence of lead in said article or an electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article, wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free article or lead free electrical appliance from those of various articles having a circuit soldered with parts or various electrical appliances based on the information about identification.

It is preferred that the recycling method further comprising:

individually separating a lead containing article having a circuit soldered with parts and a lead free article having a circuit soldered with parts for treating wastes of articles having a circuit soldered with parts.

Further, the present invention relates a recycling

method of wastes of electrical appliance containing an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accomodating said article wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating absence of lead, comprising:

discriminating an article having a circuit soldered with lead free parts from an article having a circuit soldered with lead containing parts by means of an identification marking provided on said article,

recovering, grinding and melting each of discriminated articles to separate materials constituting the article,

recycling reusable valuables contained in said materials, and

shredding the rest of the article and burying the same or treating the same at a stabilizing dumping ground or a controlled dumping ground for disposal.

The method preferably further comprises, before said discrimination,

classifying wastes of miscellaneous electrical appliances by the type of electrical appliance, identifying the presence or absence of lead by means of said identification marking to discriminate a lead free elestrical appliance from a lead containing article, and

disassembling each electrical appliance to remove an article having a circuit soldered with parts therefrom.

CLAIMS

1. An article having a circuit with parts, which are soldered by a lead free solder, and identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in said article.

2. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, wherein an electrode of said parts is a lead free electrode having a coating of a lead free solder.

3. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, wherein said parts are lead free parts containing no lead.

4. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, said article being a printed board, a film board or a housing on which a circuit is formed.

5. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 1, said article having an identification marking, bar code carrying identification information or IC carrying identification information.

6. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 5, wherein said identification marking is varied by the type of solder.

7. The article having a circuit soldered with parts in accordance with claim 5, wherein said bar code or IC

carries information about the type and composition of solder, kind of soldered parts, and a material of said article.

8. An electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article, wherein said ~~article or~~ said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead.

9. A recycling method of wastes containing an article having a circuit soldered with parts and identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in said article, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free article from those of various articles having a circuit soldered with parts based on said identification information.

10. The recycling method of wastes in accordance with claim 9, further comprising:

individually separating a lead containing article having a circuit soldered with parts and a lead free article having a circuit soldered with parts for treating wastes of articles having a circuit soldered with parts.

11. A recycling method of wastes containing an electrical appliance comprising an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accommodating said article wherein ~~said article or~~ said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

identifying wastes of lead free electrical appliance from those of various electrical appliances based on said information about identification.

12. A recycling method of wastes of electrical appliance containing an article having a circuit with parts soldered with a lead free solder and a housing accomodating said article wherein said article or said housing carries identification information indicating presence or absence of lead, comprising:

discriminating an article having a circuit soldered with lead free parts from an article having a circuit soldered with lead containing parts by means of an identification marking provided on said article,

recovering, grinding and melting each of discriminated articles to separate materials constituting the article,

recycling reusable valuables contained in said materials, and

shredding the rest of the article and buring the same or treating the same at a stabilizing dumping ground or a controlled dumping ground for disposal.

13. The recycling method of wastes of electrical appliance in accordance with claim 12, further comprising, before said discrimination:

classifying wastes of miscellaneous electrical appliances by the type of electrical appliance,

identifying the presence or absence of lead by means of said identification marking to discriminate a lead free electrical appliance from a lead containing article, and disassembling each electrical appliance to remove an article having a circuit soldered with parts therefrom.

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF RECEIPT OF
RECORD COPY

(PCT Rule 24.2(a))

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

ISHII, Kazuo
 Kitahama-Yamamoto Building
 3-6, Kitahama 2-chome
 Chuo-ku
 Osaka-shi
 Osaka 541-0041
 JAPON



Date of mailing (day/month/year) 26 January 2000 (26.01.00)	IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION
Applicant's or agent's file reference P21336-PO	International application No. PCT/JP00/00058

The applicant is hereby notified that the International Bureau has received the record copy of the international application as detailed below.

Name(s) of the applicant(s) and State(s) for which they are applicants:

MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD. (for all designated States except US)
 SUETSUGU, Kenichiro et al (for US)

International filing date : 07 January 2000 (07.01.00)
 Priority date(s) claimed : 11 January 1999 (11.01.99)
 Date of receipt of the record copy
 by the International Bureau : 21 January 2000 (21.01.00)
 List of designated Offices :

EP : AT,BE,CH,CY,DE,DK,ES,FI,FR,GB,GR,IE,IT,LU,MC,NL,PT,SE
 National : CN,KR,US

ATTENTION

The applicant should carefully check the data appearing in this Notification. In case of any discrepancy between these data and the indications in the international application, the applicant should immediately inform the International Bureau.

In addition, the applicant's attention is drawn to the information contained in the Annex, relating to:

- ☒ time limits for entry into the national phase
☒ confirmation of precautionary designations
☒ requirements regarding priority documents

A copy of this Notification is being sent to the receiving Office and to the International Searching Authority.

The International Bureau of WIPO
 34, chemin des Colombettes
 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

Facsimile No. (41-22) 740.14.35

Authorized officer:

Masashi HONDA

Telephone No. (41-22) 338.83.38

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

To:

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark
Office
Box PCT
Washington, D.C.20231
ETATS-UNIS D'AMERIQUE

in its capacity as elected Office

Date of mailing: 20 July 2000 (20.07.00)	
International application No.: PCT/JP00/00058	Applicant's or agent's file reference: P21336-PO
International filing date: 07 January 2000 (07.01.00)	Priority date: 11 January 1999 (11.01.99)
Applicant: SUETSUGU, Kenichiro et al	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International preliminary Examining Authority on:
22 May 2000 (22.05.00)

☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:

2. The election ☒ was
☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Authorized officer: J. Zahra Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38
---	---

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference P21336-PO	FOR FURTHER ACTION		See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)
International application No. PCT/JP00/00058	International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 07/01/2000	Priority date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 11/01/1999	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC H05K1/02			
Applicant MATSUSHITA ELECTRIC INDUSTRIAL CO., LTD. et al.			

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 6 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 8 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report

II ☐ Priority

III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability


IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention

V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

VI ☐ Certain documents cited

VII ☒ Certain defects in the international application

VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 22/05/2000	Date of completion of this report 19.04.2001
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority: <div style="margin-left: 20px;">  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465 </div>	Authorized officer Molenaar, E Telephone No. +49 89 2399 2159



**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/JP00/00058

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, pages:

1-4,8-27 as originally filed

5-7,7~~4~~ as received on 26/03/2001 with letter of 23/03/2001

Claims, No.:

6-8,11-14 as received on 26/03/2001 with letter of 23/03/2001

Drawings, sheets:

1/13-13/13 as originally filed

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/JP00/00058

- ☐ the description, pages:
☒ the claims, Nos.: 1 - 5, 9 - 10
☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)):

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims 6 - 8, 11 - 14
	No: Claims
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims 6 - 8, 11 - 14
	No: Claims
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims 6 - 8, 11 - 14
	No: Claims

- 2. Citations and explanations**
see separate sheet

VII. Certain defects in the international application

The following defects in the form or contents of the international application have been noted:
see separate sheet

Re Item V

Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

The invention relates to an article having a circuit with parts as defined in claim 6; to an electrical appliance as defined in claim 8 comprising such an article; and to a recycling method of wastes as defined in claims 11, 12 and 13.

Reference is made to the following documents:

D1: EP-A-0 831 683;

D2: PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1996, no. 4, (30.04.96)
& JP 07 326834 A;

D3: FR-A-2 724 529.

The document D1 is regarded as being the closest prior art to the subject-matter of claim 6, and shows (the references in parentheses applying to this document):
an article having a circuit with parts (12) which are soldered by a lead-free solder (18).

The subject-matter of claim 6 therefore differs from this known article in that the article further has identification information which indicates presence or absence of lead in said article, said identification information carrying information about the composition of the solder to enable identification of the type of solder.

The technical problem to be solved by the present invention may therefore be regarded as the article giving information regarding

- not just the amount of lead in said article,
- but, since the solder is already a lead free solder, of the type of such lead-free solder, i.e. the amount of other metals present.

The solution to this problem proposed in claim 6 of the present application is considered as involving an inventive step (Article 33(3) PCT) for the following reasons:

Document D2 shows an article (printed board 1) having a circuit with parts (a mounting component) which are soldered, and identification information (bar code 2) indicating

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the amount of lead as heavy metal in said article (the amount of lead is shown by the first digit). The bar code in D2 does not give information about the type of solder or the amounts of other metals in said solder.

The subject-matter of independent claim 8 further differs from the article known from D1 in that a housing accommodating the article is defined, said housing carrying the identification information.

Document D2 discloses a recycling method of wastes containing an article having a circuit soldered with parts and identification information indicating presence or absence of lead in said article comprising the step of identifying wastes of lead free articles from those of various articles having a circuit soldered with parts based on said information.

The subject-matter of claim 11 differs from the method known from D2 in that an electrical appliance comprising a housing accommodating the article is defined, said housing carrying the same identification information as defined in claim 6. As argued above, these features impart inventiveness to the subject-matter of claim 11.

The subject-matter of claim 12 further differs from the method known from D2 in that after discriminating an article having lead free parts from an article having lead containing parts, each of the discriminated articles is explicitly treated to separate materials constituting the article, the reusable valuables are recycled and the rest is shredded and buried or treated at its own type of dumping ground.

Document D2 only mentions these steps in the introductory part (PURPOSE) of the abstract, but document D3 discloses these steps more specifically (page 5, lines 13-15; page 6, lines 17-18; page 7, lines 3-5 and page 7, line 17 - page 8, line 11). However, both documents are silent about the feature of said housing carrying the identification information as defined in claim 6, enabling identification of the type of solder, so that the subject-matter of claim 12 does involve an inventive step too.

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For the same reasons as stated above with regard to claim 12, does the subject-matter of claim 13 also involve an inventive step.

Claims 7 and 14 are dependent on claims 6 and 8, respectively, and as such also meet the requirements of the PCT with respect to novelty and inventive step.

Re Item VII

Certain defects in the international application

Contrary to the requirements of Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT, the relevant background art disclosed in the documents D1, D2 and D3 is not mentioned in the description, nor are these documents identified therein. A document reflecting the prior art described on pages 1 - 4 is not identified in the description (Rule 5.1(a)(ii) PCT).